

**MIRANDA.**

It was a sunny evening in June, and Roma's Corners looked its best. Not that its best was anything to boast of, for it was not much of a place, consisting of only a dozen or so straggling houses, two "general stores" and a meeting house, on the line of the Bensenville and St. Paul Railway. All the buildings were of wood, and most of them were painted a dark and hideous brown, though here and there a veranda of vivid green or brilliant blue doorsteps marked the dwelling of some unusually ambitious cornerer. All dwellers at the Corners agreed that old Dea's Tiffany's house was "the smartest in the lot," and this certainly could not be denied. It stood on a small piece of rising ground overlooking the railway track, a somewhat conspicuous position, where the eleven different colors which ornamented its front could not fail to be observed of all travelers. These eleven colors were the pride of the Deacon's heart; he would stand by the hour and contemplate with placid satisfaction and modest pride the green and yellow stripes of the veranda, the slate colored cornice, or, best of all, the gorgeous new bow window "to Mirandy's room." The Deacon certainly had, as was said admiringly at the Corners, "an eye for color." Even his beseeches were all painted, either yellow or blue, and instead of being clustered together in a corner, as is generally the case, were scattered promiscuously about his garden, according to a new and original plan conceived by their owner, to whom their appearance afforded the keenest satisfaction. It was his greatest pleasure, in life to stand at the gate of a summer evening, attired in a striped flannel shirt, a palm leaf hat, and a pair of trousers descending on the apparently frail support of one suspender, luxuriously smoking a long-stemmed corn-cob pipe, and contemplating with innocent and profound admiration his many colored domestic and its surrounding beauties. The prospect might have been slightly marred for some people by the fact that Mrs. Tiffany's "windows," which were invariably filled with flowers, were invariably filled with insects. But the Deacon didn't mind; on the contrary, he rather enjoyed the sight of a few blue calico gowns and "rising sun" counterpanes flapping in the breeze. "It kinda brightens things up," he used to say. But God almighty was he was of bright colors, and generously as he had been able to gratify his taste, it did one's heart good to see how careful the Deacon was of his less fortunate neighbor's feelings. He would stroll down to the village of an evening and gaze musingly at the particular dull and dingy shade of brown which ornamented the residence of his friend, the blacksmith, would hypocritically remark that he "didn't know what such a color as that was best for the eyes, after all," and that "if it hadn't been for Mirandy's comin' home he didn't know as he would have that shade of blue out o' the b'w'winder; but gawd generally has a leaning to blue."

Mirandy had been away for four years, first at school in a far distant Eastern city, and then, without coming home, she went away to Europe for a year, partly as governess to two little sisters of a former schoolmate, partly as companion to their father and mother. Mrs. Tiffany strongly disapproved of these proceedings. She was not Mirandy's own mother, and naturally her own wife, Ag and Liz took precedence in her eyes. She didn't see what harm could befall Mirandy should have all the nooks backin' and travelin' that was comin'. But on this point the Deacon, usually mild and yielding, had been firm and loyal to the memory of his first wife, the pretty, gentle Eastern girl, whose "look larnin'" had been almost her only consolation in the pine solitudes of Romulus, and who had begged of him "not to let Mirandy grow up 'West.' And the Deacon had promised and bravely kept his word, in spite of the scolding and lackeymey complaints of Mrs. Tiffany, the second and her gris.

Twice during the four years did the Deacon visit her at school, and now at last Mirandy is coming home. It is the 13th of June, and she is to sail for America the 16th, and the Deacon stands at the gate and lets his pipe out half a dozen times as he thinks of his "little gal," and wonders how she will like the new paper in her room, and whether that new curtain hadn't oughter be blue instead o' pink."

Far away in the smoke and noise of London Mirandy is parting from Fitzgerald.

"You know," he said, "I shall be back in New York next year, probably for good, and then shall pay a visit to—what is it?"—smiling, "Rome?"—no Rome, and carry you off like the knight of the fairy tale, I hope."

You won't like it—Romulus, I mean?"—she answers, the corner of her mouth trowing; "it—it is so different; I hate it!" with quick passion, "and yet," dropping her voice, "I hate myself more for feeling so. Oh, help me, help me to bear it all!" she cries suddenly, turning to him with a pitiful little gesture. He soothes her half impatiently—is it a shade of annoyance which crosses his face? And then "You must be brave, Mirandy," he says. She moves away from him, pushing the hair back from her forehead, and looking up steadily. "Yes," she answers, "I will be brave and patient." Then presently, as if longing to be assured, "You—you will come; I know you will," with a little break in the voice she tries to keep steady. "Of course," he says, lightly. She looks at him full wonderingly. This parting, which is so terrible to her, can it be a small thing to him?

A dreadful feeling of doubt and loneliness comes over her. She turns to the window in dumb agony and caws into the crowded street. Fitzgerald paces the room for a few moments. Then he comes up to her. "Mirandy," he says, "this sort of thing is awful, you know. We had far better cut it short." He takes both her hands. She is quite calm and passive now. It seems to her that all feeling has left her. Through intense suffering she has almost passed into unconsciousness of pain; her face is white and still. Fitzgerald looks at her curiously. "Mirandy," he says, gently, "we can write you know." A little gleam of encouragement passes over her face. "Yes," she answers, "I had not thought of that." Then the strange, cold, weary returns. She lets him hold her in his arms and press his lips upon her brow without sign or word. She tells him that he "will surely come next year," she sees the puzzled look with which he regards her, she says "good-by" in an odd, hard sort of voice, which sounds strange to her own ears, and then—it is all over and she is alone.

A little more than two weeks later the Deacon stands on the little wooden platform of Romulus station, waiting for an incoming train. His scanty gray locks are combed carefully over his sunburnt neck; the palm-leaf hat has been discarded in favor of a very stiff, very high, very uncomfortable beaver; the one suspender is hidden by a Sunburst coat of supernatural blackness and shininess. Altogether the Deacon is "gotten up smart," according to Mrs. Tiffany, who

has snorted contemptuously at the idea of "all this fuss bin' made for that Mirandy." Mrs. Tiffany, however, is in a high state of suppressed excitement herself, as are also the girls. Ag has purchased the gayest bouquet to be had at the Corners (blue satin and yellow feathers), with exuberance and declared pur-pose "takin' the show out o' Mirandy's furin' fixin's"; and Liz has spent the greater part of three days in perfecting a certain wonderful arrangement of her molasses-candy colored lace, which arrangement is declared by her friend, Miss Paul, who has lately visited Chicago, to be the "latest European style." It is a tearfully hot afternoon, and there has been no rain for a fortnight. The little grass plot is brown and dusty, the sun beats down fiercely on the yellow, sandy path. Inside the house are early supper set out on the table; flies are buzzing about the wire gauze cover which protects some sticky-looking "preserve," and a big bumble-bee, which has come in through the window and accidentally stumbled into the pewter milk jug, has managed to get out of it again, much to his own astonishment, and is slowly traveling across the table, leaving little droppings of cream to mark his progress. Mrs. Paul, her cork-screw curl gathered in a knot behind one ear, her sleeves tucked well up to the elbow, displaying a liberal expanse of red arm, is standing on the doorstep. Liz, attired in a pink gown and a profusion of cheap jewelry, is lolling on a horse-hair sofa reading a dime novel,

And the Deacon brings Mirandy home.

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Slowly and wearily the days have become weeks, and weeks months, and the months have lengthened into years, and two years have gone by since Mirandy's home-coming.

It is again an evening in June, and the Deacon's palm-leaf hat is used vigorously to beat off the mosquitoes, as he and Mirandy sit down on the quiet, deserted path. "Father," she begins to say, "I want you to do something for me." "Now, that's kind of courous," remarks the Deacon, "for I was jus' a hinkin' Mirandy, what that was I could do to make you happier."

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She stands for a few minutes looking into the dusty street. Then she turns; the dust has faded from her face; she is very white.

"I went shopping this morning with Aunt Libby, isher," she says, in a strange, hard voice, "and we bought this," taking a parcel from the table, "for Liz. Do you think she'll like it?"

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"Hush," she answers, and kisses him. The next day they go back to Romulus.

And then Aunt Libby comes in, and the Deacon remarks that he is "as like as not to her a 'tarnation lot o' bother about that reper, and maybe he won't git back afore supper time." Aunt Libby promises to "show Mirandy around." And so the old ones leave them.

Something or other the day, which seemed interminable, draws to a close, and toward evening Mirandy is seated by the window, a small cousin on her knee, for whose benefit she is impersonating a fairy tale. Each nerve in her body thrills with intense throb of suppressed excitement. What is it that she expects she hardly knows, and will not ask herself, but at every footfall on the steps outside she starts and claps her hands more tightly together. A bright bush is on her cheek, her eyes are large with expectation. The fairy tale is nearly ended: "So you see, after all," Mirandy is saying, "the knight comes back to the princess"—there is a step outside, the door opens, and the Deacon comes in alone. "Hey—he—he ye had a pleasant day, Mirandy?" he begins, nervously.

Mirandy puts the child off her knee and runs out of the room. Then, "What is it, father?" she says, quizzically.

The Deacon gives a little uneasy cough. "The friend as we was speakin' of the other day," he says, slowly, "he's married, Mirandy."

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Broad Wagon Tires.

J. W. Rankin, of the Missouri Agricultural College, has been making some experiments to demonstrate the value of good roads and broad tires on road and farm wagons.

He says that the condition of the country road is one of the surest indications of the civilization of the people. The trials were made with a carefully tested dynamometer; the loads drawn were 1,665 pounds each, and the toloons and tires were one and a half and three inches, respectively. The first test was on the blue grass award, somewhat, though he had not rained for two weeks. The average draft of the narrow-tired wagon was 430 pounds, while that of the wide-tired was 310 pounds—a difference of over 41 per cent in favor of the wide tire.

Assuming the wagons to weigh 1,000 pounds each, the same team could draw 3,245 pounds on the wide tire as easily as 2,000 pounds on the narrow, and, besides this, the wide tire did not cut through and injure the turf as the others did. In a further test, on a partially dried dirt road, the broad wheels showed a draft of 371 pounds to 411 for the narrow, being 12.7 per cent, in favor of broad tires, so that with the same wear and tear of team, the broad-tired wagon could carry 331 pounds per ton load more than the other. Although these differences disappear on hard, well-made roads, he concludes that every farm should have one or more broad-tired wagons, and says the teamsters on the college farms always prefer such for use about the farm. We have long known the value of a broad tire for farm wagons, and have seen a one for all work on raw ground or meadow land. It costs very little, if any, more, and soon pays for itself by saving

time.

*A Voice From Italy.*

Rev. W. G. Van Meter, Superintendent of the Italian Bible and Sunday School Mission, at Rome Italy, writes under date September 1, 1884: "The Italian salt, Pisa's Extract "Acqua di Dio," Water of God. We use it for every ache and pain; it is indispensable in our medical department. I knew it was good before, but now I can not find words to express my praise of its excellence."

Invaluable for cuts, burns, bruises, scratches, neuralgia, etc.

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"Father, father," she sobbs, and suddenly buried her quivering face upon his shoulder. The Deacon gently strokes her hair. "Ef I would do ye any good to tell it, Mirandy," he says, hesitatingly. "Yes, I will tell you," she answers quickly. "I want to have to do you long ago, but at first I put it off, and afterward—somehow—I couldn't."

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